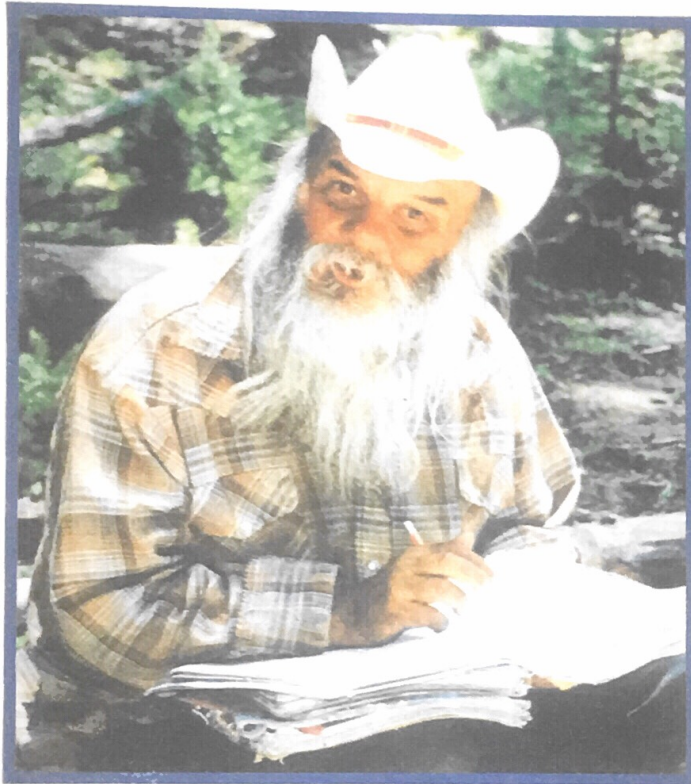




Rainbow Family Life Stories



*by Jodey Bateman.
Interviews with Rainbow
Family of Living Light
folks conducted between
1977 and 2008.*

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13.E DAVID EARL - "I FOUND TRUE
LOVE HERE"

10 pages

[13.E]

[David's story shows a long, gradual healing of a variety of hang-ups, especially after his involvement with Rainbow began. At first, he stole now and then and like many who steal, he had a deep mistrust of the people around him. As he has learned trust, he has quit stealing.]

David Earl - I Found True Love Here.

I was born technically in Chattahoochee, Florida, in 1956, but it was more like Georgia and Alabama - the Georgia state line is only about half a mile from downtown. My father worked at a grocery store for most of my childhood. For the last three years I was at home, my mother was working at the state hospital.

I left home at 16. I had a lot of pressure, a lot of questions that couldn't be answered where I was that could only be answered through travel. I was ridiculed for the way I lived. Most people were into showing off and fighting. Seems like they always had to prove themselves. I didn't like to have to prove myself. All I wanted to do was prove myself to me. Another thing I was short and other people got picked on too and I used to hang around with them. I thought I was gonna have a nervous breakdown. In fact, there's one time when I possibly did. I've always been very sensitive. I have a lot of Scorpio influence - four planets. Back when I had an interest in astrology, I checked it out, looking for answers about why I was the way I was. Astrology gave me answers, but it's not of use to me anymore. I found out why I was, but as far as predicting the future, I believe you can't do that with the stars. The stars can influence the future, but they can't tell you what it is.

Another reason I wanted to leave home was talking to the hitch hikers who came through town. They were some of the most far out people I've ever met.

I loved being on the road. I met a lot of the best people, almost always good people. When you're on the road trying to hitch hike, you're depending on people to have charity, and you meet people who have charity and I relate well to people like that. There was

a sense of protection about being on the road because it sheltered me from people who were selfish and greedy and didn't care.

When I left, I went to Atlanta. I went back home to get my things. When I left home again, my father left my mother. He drove me to the road and dropped me off. I went back Thanksgiving 1972 to see my mother. While I was there, I ended up wrecking a car because I kept falling asleep at the wheel because I had been doing some kind of downer. The cops came down. They found out I was wanted for breaking probation for obscene phone calls I made while I was at home. I don't like to talk about that. It's a lot of sad memories. They released me on court probation and made me promise I wouldn't leave again, but the day after Christmas I started out again.

I spent New Years 1973 and my birthday January 6, in New Orleans. After that I went to Ocean Beach and San Diego. There I met some people who had a commune called Hole in the Wall north of Yuma. I went to the commune. It was just an old run-down shack. Some of the walls were knocked out. There were no doors. There was a fireplace, but no chimney and they patched up the walls with blankets and things and called it Hole in the Wall.

We lived mostly on food stamps and the Quechan Indians gave us some of their government commodity food. There were orchards nearby and the owners let us come in and look for fruit left behind after the harvest was over. Some of the people made trash runs to the dumpsters behind stores in town for food. I lived there sort of part time. I took off to Florida and Texas and came back - back and forth through the entire winter.

It's just that people see too much of each other and they just get irritable and I was getting into traveling. I was having a good time partying at the time. From there I wound up going back to Florida. I had worked out an agreement with my probation officer. I called him from Yuma and told him that if they let me go where I wanted to go, I would write him or contact him once a month.

Spring came and the desert started to get hot. I met up with a fellow in Benson, Arizona, and he knew a couple of chicks in Sarasota,

Florida, so we went there and got a job cleaning mildew off of houses with a chemical solution. It was an easy job. Back then Sarasota was real nice, but it hurt itself the same way as any place that's good. Everybody hears about it, and it isn't good any more. There used to be a lot of togetherness. Everybody partied on the beach, but now there's a lot of division. Everybody goes their separate ways.

I left toward the end of spring, 1973, and went up to Panama City, in the Florida Panhandle and spent a good deal of the summer there. Sometime before the summer was over, I left. I had lost my shoes at the beach. I had never needed them there. My feet were getting tougher all the time. So I hitched barefoot to Colorado. Someone gave me sandals. It was a good thing I did, because after I got them, I needed them real bad. The ground is rough in the Rockies.

Then someone gave me warmer shoes when it got cold.

I stayed in Colorado for the fall. In October the rains started to come. I went to Pekin, Illinois. I knew some people there that I had met at the beach in Florida. I met up with this girl in Pekin and we got engaged. So I wanted her to meet my mother. We decided to hitch down to Florida to see my mother. I had a back pack I had stolen in New Orleans from some people who let me stay at their place. On the way to Florida, we met up with two carloads traveling together. We rode with our dirty clothes in one car and our stuff rode in another car. The two families with the cars had an argument and the family with my stolen back pack decided to go back to Cincinnati, while the car with us went on to Florida. I didn't realize till later it was karma for stealing.

In Florida my mother gave me the engagement ring and wedding ring my dad had given her. Then we went to Illinois a few days later. At this time I still didn't have a job. I was sleeping in this place and that. Sometimes I would sleep in my fiancée's mother's basement when my fiancée would let me in. Her mother hated me. I finally got a job working for Libby's canning pumpkins in Wheaton, Illinois. That only lasted for three days. I had to hitch from Pekin to work and it was hard to get there on time.

Then I got another job in a car wash in Peoria, Illinois. I finally got my own apartment, but I couldn't make enough money at the car wash to survive on. So I decided to go to Ithaca, New York.

where my dad lived. I had an uncle in Ithaca on my dad's side. He was a staff member at Ithaca Gun. He got me a job there. Toni, the girl I was going to get married to, was going to wait in Illinois until I got enough money for her to come to Ithaca and live with me. I worked through the remainder of the winter and on into July, 1974. I had enough money but there were some strange things going on with Toni. It was a regular thing for me to call her every pay day. We wrote each other steadily. It got to where she wouldn't write me and she wasn't there when I would call. One day as I woke up, I had a dream that she was seeing somebody else. So I got a 30 day leave from the gun shop and went to Illinois to see about her. I found out that what I had dreamed was true and that ended that.

I didn't stay in Ithaca. I just went there and got the rest of my belongings and went back to Illinois and stayed until the last week of July. Then I went to the Ozark Music Festival at Sedalia, Missouri. It had 27 bands - 26 were big name. I got in free. It was no problem getting in free, because they sold all the tickets and there was still plenty of room. There was lots and lots of drugs - everything you wanted. There was no law enforcement inside the fair grounds. From Sedalia I went to New Orleans and then back to Illinois for a week or two. Then I went to Austin, because at that time Austin had become my favorite city - it still is the only city I enjoy.

I lived at Hippie Hollow by Lake Travis. It's a place where all the hippies go skinny dipping and camping out, a place where the homeless would not be bothered. LCRA (Lower Colorado River Authority) land - some kind of state trip land set aside for state use.

I made a trip to Port Aransas and stole a radio there and brought it back to Hippie Hollow. I kept it with all my belongings. I went to get my belongings the day before Labor Day - and found out they were gone - along with the radio. Just like my back pack. This was a realization for me that what they say about karma is right. Everything you do does return to you.

I went to the Nacogdoches Country Jam. It was a country music festival for hippies. It was held in a cow pasture, so there were a lot of mushrooms. I began to learn very fast - the mushrooms taught me. I had a very philosophical high. People were giving me a lot of food and I was turning a lot of people on to mushroom tea. I began to

realize what love and giving was all about. I went back to Austin and saw how trashed but it was at Hippie Hollow. I couldn't live there. I couldn't stand to look at the place.

I did a lot of traveling—that was all I did. I was burning a lot of bridges. It was kind of a transition point. I did three months of nothing but hitch hiking. I spent Christmas in Houston. Then I went west to El Paso. I heard all about a hippie town in Oregon called Takelma. It used to be a mining town. I got there New Years' Eve, the dawn of '75. Takelma was a very cosmic place. I was meeting high people and learning more and more every day. I began to slow down while I was there. All my hyper energy was burning me off. Takelma was mellowing me out.

I got to know this lady named Lila who had a store there—it was the only business in town. There were people in Takelma who wanted to become a co-op, a community store. I volunteered, but the volunteer bit, the co-operative, wasn't ready to happen, so she went back to a regular store. I got paid a dollar or two a day for working, but she made sure there were some pluses. She made sure I always had something to eat and a place to stay. I stayed there the rest of the winter.

Then summer came and I heard about the Rainbow Gathering in Arkansas and I went there. I thought it was really neat, people getting together like that. I really got off on the circles and the OMing. To me that was power. And even now it's power—unbeatable power. I also got into the partying aspect. My trips until then had not had much philosophy in them, but then they got philosophical. There were a few things at the gathering that bummed me out like arguing. Arguing to me is a fight, whether it gets physical or not. Michael John Down there at Arkansas had the idea for a gathering at Christmas in Florida.

After the gathering, I spent 22 days in jail in Arkansas for hitchhiking with two guys that had stolen a car. The 22 days was just waiting for arraignment. I got a chance to think things over a lot—about stealing. Some people think it's all right to steal from a store, but not all right to steal from a brother. They think it's all right to partake of all that is stolen if they didn't steal it. But I found out the curse of stealing rests on all who take part in it. It doesn't matter who you steal from. What matters is that it's stolen.

I left for Oregon and stayed there almost until Christmas. Then, shortly after Thanksgiving, I left for Grassy Key, Florida, where the Christmas gathering was supposed to be. I met quite a few people at Grassy Key who were looking for the gathering organizers. But they never showed up. The paper was giving us a lot of bad publicity - a lot of slander. Finally in the paper there was some information about where it would be - that piece of land in the Everglades. We finally found it. We got there just at the time the first bus did, December 23. Christmas Eve somebody had seven pounds of pot. I was there for Christmas day and a few days after that.

Then GI Jody was coming down pretty heavy on some people in Michael John's tent and I didn't like the energy, so I left. I wasn't gone very long. I went to Gainesville, I think - just went until I turned around and came back. I was there till the end. The alcohol element took over completely. There was constant bickering, fussing. An old man got stabbed, guns got fired. I managed to stick it out until Big Blue, the bus everybody bought, left for the Fiddlers' Convention at Union Grove, North Carolina. Then I left with a girl named Kathy that I had met at the Christmas Gathering. We went to Texas and then we made our way to Union Grove.

We saw the Big Blue bus. It was a trashed-out bus. It brought me shame. It had a big sign on the side saying RAINBOW FAMILY and not at all showing what the Rainbow Family ideals are. The Rainbow Family began to get a bad name.

Kathy and I went to Bisbee, Arizona, and lived in a cave for about two weeks. There just happened to be a tipi right across the ravine and nothing else around. From there we made our way through Nevada, northern California and finally to Takelma, Oregon. In Takelma we met this small family that was trying to put together a bus stop for line-in buses. We lived with them and worked with them. We all went to the gathering in Montana.

I didn't want to go to Montana. I felt I was going to regret it. I did - but I didn't. I learned something from it. Kathy went out on me - slept with another guy while we were there. I told her that was it and called it quits right there. Later that day some people talked me into going back and talking to her. Later that day, we got married there. I did it more out of desperation than

anything else. Medicine Story married us.

From Montana, Kathy and I went to Drain, Oregon to visit Garrick Beck and he let us look at the Rainbow Oracle, and I thought it was right on. Then we had another big, big fight. She just took off and wouldn't explain why. And then she came back again.

At this point, I was really desperate because I wanted to hang onto her. So I suggested we should go to New Hampshire and work for her father because he owns four businesses there. She called her father and he said, "Sure, come on out." Then he asked how we were gonna get there and we said we were gonna hitch hike.

And he said, "Noway," and sent plane tickets. And for me that fulfilled another dream because I always wanted to see the country from the air, especially the Great Lakes and the mountains. Kathy's father had a trailer already rented out for us. The cupboards were full of groceries. He put me to work at his gas station and her at his pancake house.

Just before Thanksgiving, 1976, I got a letter from one of my aunts in Florida. My mother was living with her. The letter told me my mother was in the hospital with cancer and only a 20% chance of making it and that I should come down as soon as I could. So the day before Thanksgiving, I hitched for Florida. It took me 34 hours to get there. I got to see her for a week. All of her family got to see her. Then I went back to New Hampshire about a week later. Then two days after I got back, I got a phone call saying that she had passed away.

January came and I turned 21. Me and Kathy were still fighting a lot. So I started realizing that the only reason I was hanging onto her was to beat loneliness and I was still lonely. She was constantly trying to make me what I wasn't and I tried to make her what she wasn't. So I left and went as far as Atlanta. Then I turned back. We tried again to make it work. We kept trying until March when we broke up for good. Then I went back to Sarasota. I couldn't make up my mind what to do or where to go. Seems like I spent most of my time heading places and never getting there. I finally went to see my dad in Beverly, Massachusetts.

I got a job there working in a metal cabinet shop - a small

factory. I worked there for about a month. I was living with my dad, my stepmother, my three step sisters and my baby sister. My stepmother and her three kids were constantly fighting, cursing and swearing and it started driving me up the wall so I quit my job and split.

I wound up going back to Texas. Back to Houston and Austin. While I was in Texas, I would pick mushrooms in the Houston area and take them to the lake in Austin and party with them there. Labor Day 1977 I was in Austin and I decided to go back to Houston. I got there that night and all my belongings got ripped off, but this time it wasn't because of something I ripped off, but because of something else I did that caused me to deserve getting ripped off. I'd rather not say what.

After I got ripped off, I decided to go back to Takelma. On the way I had nothing until I got to Amarillo where I got turned on to a jacket. And I found a canteen in Flagstaff, which I still have. When I got to Takelma, I started finding more things - blankets, more clothes. Through all this time on the road it was like God was proving himself to me, showing how he does take care of us. Because I got shot down to nothing and always got back what was lost.

Around Halloween, I went back to Massachusetts to stay with my dad. I never found another job while I was there until March, 1978, when my little brother came up from Florida. We went to Houston with the intention of finding a few days' work. We got there in the early morning. We wanted to make it to the Salvation Army early enough to catch the early morning labor pools, but we didn't make it early enough, so we decided to head on to Austin. On the way to Austin, this contractor picked us up and told us where there was plenty of construction work in Houston. We decided to go check it out. We crossed the freeway to turn back. I held out my jacket and went, "Toro! Toro!" It was this rich guy who told us he wouldn't have stopped if I hadn't done that. He took us to his place. He was living alone because he was getting a divorce. After we took a swim, he offered us a job doing overall cleanup around his house because he wanted to sell it. He paid us \$4 an hour plus room and board. We made \$60 a piece altogether.

Then we left for Austin. On the way we got picked up by another day's work doing construction. We made \$25 a piece. The next day we came to the Rainbow House. I was afraid to stay here because of the shooting. I was afraid there would be more trouble. I came here because I heard there was Rainbow here. I wanted to check into where their heads were at.

Up until this time, I had the impression the Rainbow Family was like all the rest of the churches—good ideas but bad vibes. All I saw was hypocrisy because I wasn't looking deep enough or hard enough. I had never gotten into group discussions with any of the Rainbow Tribe before. I said I was bummed out, like about the kitchen. And they said, "If you don't like it, go do something about it," and that's how I got into washing dishes.

I saw the enemy and the enemy was me. So I met the enemy—being us. Instead of being bummed out by what's wrong, I realized I should get off my ass and do something. I started feeling better. Washing dishes made my whole day.

I started going through a lot of realizations about what God is and why God is. Instead of wishing for a change, I learned to make it. This is the biggest turning point for me. Now that I'm sure of myself, I know what I'm doing and I know why I'm doing it and I'm not lonely any more. I've gotten closer to people here than I have at any place. I found true love here. The last time I experienced it before was at an Assembly of God church when I was just a young teenager.

I've been blessed with more understanding than I had before. It all started with washing dishes. Like you have to work with your hands. In the open discussions we've been having, I've learned more from Joyce and Harmony than anyone I've met in I don't know how long.

As far as the Rainbow Family and the gatherings, I feel that the gathering together of all the tribes of earth is a fulfillment of Revelation. Not like we're to be together in the flesh, but that we're getting to be more of one mind. Revelation talks of the 144,000—12,000 from each tribe. Revelation talks about rainbows and gatherings and circles. I believe we're in what Revelation calls the

sixth day of darkness. That darkest part before the dawn.

I've been around the Rainbow Family for three years and it's taken me that long to know the Rainbow. I didn't see the foundation of it until I came to the Austin Rainbow House and saw the bad energy here and how we made the bad energy good. Things are running very smooth now.

[David Earl is still coming to Rainbow Gatherings. He has been married since this interview.]